Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

January/February 2008

For and About Local Government Development

New Fire Trucks Boost Community Fire Fighting Capabilities 2

Managing Emergencies: Community Emergency Plans Start With Residents 4

ANA Supported Volunteer Fire Fighter Training Update 6

Community Nominated Service Excellence Awards 7

Profile 8

Working to Keep **Communities Safe**

Camperville's new fire truck gets a fill of water for use in testing the pumps and hoses.

Manitoba

This Issue

Welcome to the January/February 2008 *Community Contact* Newsletter.

Welcome to the January/February 2008 *Community Contact* newsletter. Because this publication comes out bi-monthly, we have decided to start labelling the newsletter for the two-month period that it covers. Also on the topic of minor changes, you may have noticed we printed our last issue on a different paper. We chose white paper to make the print stand out better for easier reading and to allow us to improve the way photographs look. We're pleased with the results, as we hope you are, and we have chosen to continue with the new paper stock in this issue and issues to come.

Our January/February newsletter theme is protective services. This Aboriginal and Northern Affairs program area includes community fire departments, constable programs, emergency planning and ambulance services. In this issue, we list communities that have received new or upgraded fire trucks and communities where volunteer fire fighters have participated in the ANA and OFC supported NFPA 1001 Level 1 fire fighting training.

Because community emergency plans are scheduled to be updated and provided to ANA by March 31, 2008, we include an article contributed by Manitoba Emergency Measure Organization (EMO) called *Managing Emergencies: Community Emergency Plans Start With Residents*. This information will help community councils determine what kind of potential emergencies may affect their communities and how best to address them in an emergency plan.

Along with these articles, we feature a notice for the upcoming Community Council and Employee Recognition Program with nominations open from February 1 to March 31, 2008. We also include an article incorporating the thoughts of retiring employee Garry Nabess on the importance of a dedicated community volunteer fire department. A long time employee with his department, Garry has been involved for many years with helping communities establish effective fire and constable programs. The newsletter ends with a brief look back at Garry's career in government and with ANA.

Enjoy this issue and please feel free to contact us with your comments, pictures and article suggestions, or to request additional copies. We hope 2008 will unfold as a satisfying and productive year for all of our readers.

2008-02053/

NEW FIRE TRUCKS

Boost Community Fire Fighting Capabilities

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) has been busy this past year working with communities to help improve their fire fighting capabilities through training and by supporting the purchase of several new fire trucks. In 2007, four new fire trucks were delivered and two others were redeployed.

Following the recommendations of the 2005 *Fire Program Review*, ANA is continuing to provide training and equipment for several community fire departments. This includes upgrading older equipment or purchasing new fire trucks. The new fire trucks provide greater water capacity, more fire crew capacity and room to carry more fire equipment.

The communities receiving new fire trucks in 2007 included:

- Camperville
- Cormorant
- Cross Lake
- Wabowden

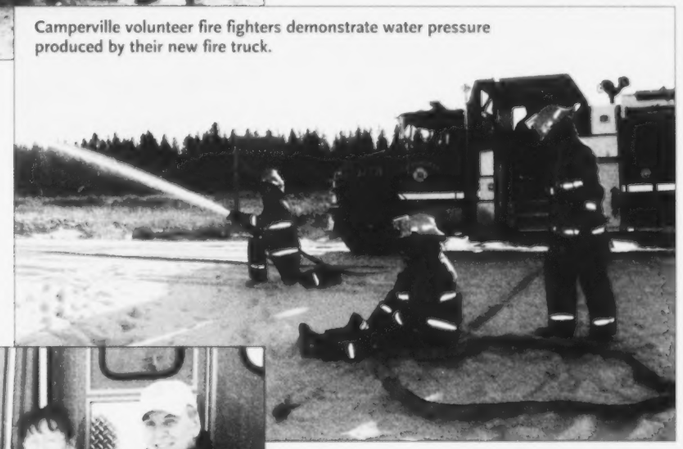
The community of Easterville also received an upgraded fire truck in 2007. Brochet and Gods Lake Narrows are set to receive fire trucks delivered by winter road this year.

Cross Lake youngsters examine the replacement for Old Betsy (inset) that served their community for many years.

ANA Minister Oscar Lathlin presents new fire truck keys to Cormorant Fire Chief Lawrence Genaille. They are joined by Councillor Frieda Parenteau and Cormorant's community administrative officer Bev Shlachetka to the left. Councillor Larry Ladouceur and ANA protective services consultant Garry Nabess are at the right.

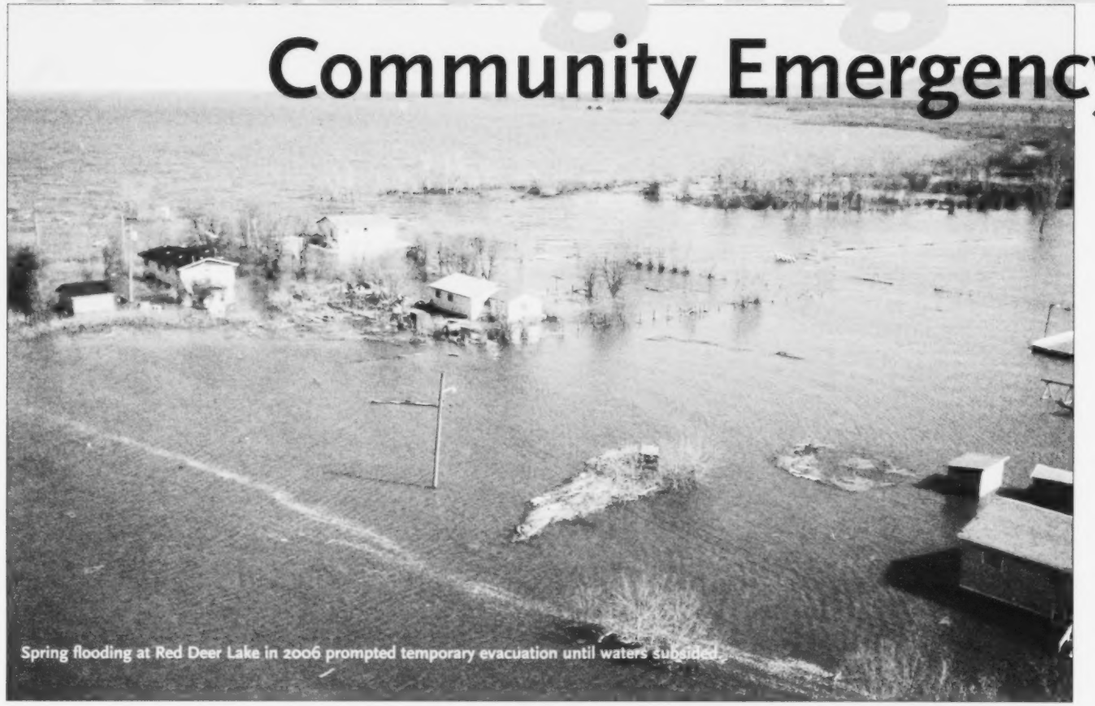
Wabowden's new fire truck with enclosed fire crew cab.

Camperville volunteer fire fighters demonstrate water pressure produced by their new fire truck.



Left to right, Garry Nabess, Claude Gervais of Fort Garry Industries, Cross Lake Fire Chief Darlene Beck, ANA executive director Freda Albert and Cross Lake Councillor Bob Smith at presentation of new fire truck keys.

Community Emergency Plans Start With Residents



Spring flooding at Red Deer Lake in 2006 prompted temporary evacuation until waters subsided.

When disaster strikes, entire communities can be affected by injuries and severe property damage. It's important for people in communities to accept responsibility for their own safety and well-being as well and the safety and well-being of their families. When every person and family prepares, the whole community becomes safer. By doing everything you can to take care of yourself, you help free up critical emergency resources for those who are more severely affected or unable to cope.

Every resident and business has a role to play in emergency preparedness. The Canadian response system assumes that residents should be able to care for themselves for the first three days during a disaster. Community governments will assist where possible, but it may take time to protect or to assess and repair damage to the community infrastructure that supports everyone. When a disaster requires more resources than a community can provide, it can request help from the provincial government. If the province requires assistance, it can get help from the federal government.

Many potential emergencies can cause difficulties for community residents. Some hazards are with us all the time and others change with the seasons. Think about what hazards are likely in the next few months. Think about the hazards that will affect you and what you personally need to plan for in each season.

Our winters present many different hazards:

- Blizzard conditions can close highways and make even local travel unsafe.
- Heavy snowfall can cause building damage and snow removal must be done safely to avoid injury.
- Severe cold weather can last for weeks and have serious affects on all community infrastructure.
- Loss of utilities such as water, power, gas or communications can be dangerous in winter.
- Winter is also a common time for disease outbreaks, particularly communicable diseases such as influenza and colds.

Spring can bring:

- flooding
- severe and unexpected storms that can include rain, ice and snow

Summer brings:

- active weather that can change quickly
- extreme hot weather can affect everyone, especially children and the elderly
- forest fires
- summer thunderstorms can bring lightning, hail, damaging winds and even tornadoes
- short bursts of heavy rainfall or prolonged rainfall can lead to flash floods or prolonged flooding

Fall brings:

- fall flooding
- rapidly changing weather, severe storms
- unexpected severe cold

All year we may face dangers from:

- incidents involving hazardous materials
- accidents or other incidents caused by human error
- criminal activity that turns violent or requires special responses

A collision and fire belches toxic fumes, threatening health and the environment.

Heavy runoff can wash out roads and cut off emergency access for remote communities.

The important thing is to be aware that any of the hazards discussed in this article may affect any part of your community. A river may directly affect some people by flooding property along its banks and indirectly affect others with road closures. A heavy rainfall may cause a flash flood in parts of the community far away from a river. Fall flooding is often caused by strong winds blowing water out of a lake bed or by ice building up in a river and backing water up over low lying lands. Loss of utilities, human error, severe weather, criminal activity and hazardous material incidents may affect all or a portion of a community.

Each hazard has its own risks to your family health and safety. Every person should:

- Know where emergency supplies are stored and be prepared to use them.
- Know what the community plan is and how it will apply to you and your family.

Wherever you live, it is important to prepare for emergencies. The more we do today to prepare, the better we will manage when an incident does occur.

Community Contact thanks Barrett Nelson, regional emergency officer with Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, West Region, for work in preparing this article.

Safety is a Community Commitment

In the weeks before his own retirement, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) Local Government Development Division protective services consultant Garry Nabess made it a point to attend a retirement of a different kind. He attended a ceremony in Cross Lake as that community celebrated the retirement of their aging fire truck, affectionately called Old Betsy, and the arrival of a shiny new machine for their community.

When a local volunteer fire fighter joked about the tears in the fire chief's eyes as the fire truck exchange took place, Garry's first impulse was to smile, but he also appreciated the sentiments expressed by Fire Chief Darlene Beck as she reminisced about the history of their fire department.

Darlene is well known in her community as a dedicated, civic-minded person. She and her brother, Bob Smith, represent a driving force behind the Cross Lake Emergency Services Department. The passion Darlene and Bob display through their community involvement and their commitment to excellence in emergency services goes a long way toward explaining how they have consistently been able to draw large numbers of dedicated volunteers from their community.

Happy to see northerners investing time and energy to make their communities safer, Garry believes one of the greatest challenges will now be to maintain fire fighter skill levels achieved through the ANA and OFC sponsored NFPA 1001 Level 1 fire fighting training initiative. Fire departments will have to be conscientious about following training plans. They will also have to take advantage of opportunities made available for new recruits to advance their training and look seriously at ways to provide NFPA fire fighting training locally.

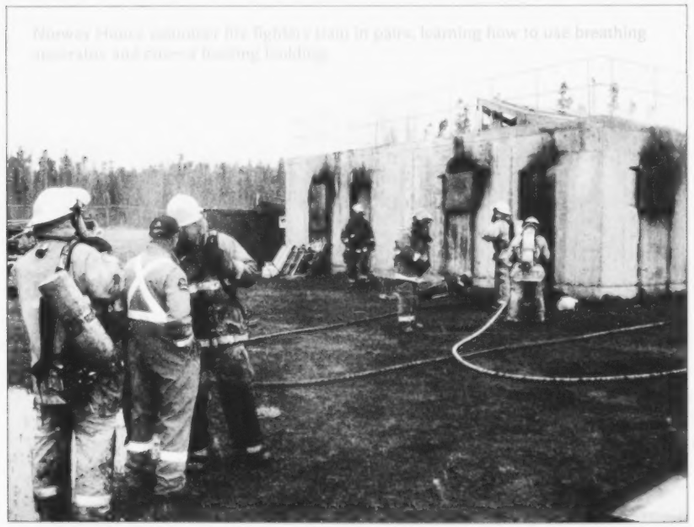
ANA Supported Volunteer Fire Fighter Training Update

Over the past year, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) continued supporting community based National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Level 1 fire fighting training for Fire Program Service Group 3 and 4 communities. To date, more than 12 communities and over 100 volunteer fire fighters have participated in the Level 1 training. Training takes place in partnership with the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC).

The OFC training partnership was established in 2005. Training takes place in selected communities each year. A community's participation is based on the readiness of their fire department and its commitment to have their volunteer fire fighters attend training that lasts between six and eight weeks.

In 2007, the communities of Sherridon, Pikwitonei, Pine Dock and Norway House sent 30 volunteer fire fighters to participate in the NFPA 1001 Level 1 training. Nineteen participants completed the NFPA 1001 Level 1 certification, recognized across North America and 11 received Manitoba Level 1 certification recognized in Manitoba. The community of Easterville, along with volunteer fire fighters from the adjacent first nation, started their NFPA 1001 Level 1 training in December 2007 with a completion date set for February 2008.

ANA hopes to complete all community based training by 2010. Once community-based training is completed, ANA will be examining the concept of offering training in a central location so new volunteers, and those who were not able to attend previous training, can participate.



Norway House volunteer fire fighters train in pairs, learning how to use breathing apparatus and control hosing holding.

Community Nominated Service Excellence Awards

Nominations open February 1 to March 31

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs makes a point of annually recognizing community councils, community council employees and community residents for their commitment to improving the lives of community residents.

A component of the Community Council and Employee Recognition Program includes the **Community Nominated Service Excellence Awards.** All community councils have been sent an information package about the awards and should be aware that nominations will be accepted between February 1 and March 31 this year.

The following are eligible for award nominations:

- council members
- community administrative officers
- assistant community administrative officers
- public works employees, including water/wastewater and solid waste operators
- recreation directors
- constables
- EMO members
- fire departments (chief, deputy and fighters)
- volunteers

The following are examples of accomplishments that may qualify individuals for service excellence award recognition in various classifications:

Administration:

- contributes significantly to achieving goals set in the community management plan
- goes beyond the call of duty to introduce new ideas that improve efficiency or productivity
- participates actively in projects that help community development
- continually exceeds job expectations

Public works:

- continuous improvement (or maintaining high level) of infrastructure audits grades
- demonstrates willingness to mentor backup public works employees
- effective use of a maintenance management system
- demonstrates excellence in job performance
- participates in activities outside of normal job responsibility to promote a healthy living environment for residents (ex: school functions, awareness campaigns)

Constable:

- demonstrates leadership and role model qualities
- excellence in job performance
- participates in community activities outside of normal job functions
- demonstrates high level of commitment to improving safety and security for community residents

EMO member:

- participates in creating the community emergency plan
- helps apply the plan during an actual emergency (ex: forest fire)

Fire department:

- dedication and promotion of fire safety
- proven efficiently managed fire department (includes required number of trained firefighters)
- commitment to fire prevention through community awareness activities (ex: school promotions)

Recreation director:

- demonstrated dedication to recreation programs that improve the overall wellness of the community
- innovative and creative improvements to recreation programming that demonstrate measurable results in terms of health and social well being (ex: crime statistics, community partnerships)

Volunteer:

- excellence shown through time volunteered to improve the quality of life in communities (ex: youth programs, suicide prevention, leadership)

Humanitarian

- special consideration given to individuals to recognize promotion of human welfare or social reform

Be sure to nominate deserving individuals in your community!

Profile

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) wishes all the best to retiring employee Garry Nabess, who retired in January, 2008.

Garry worked with the ANA Local Government Development Division Northern Region for 17 years, spending the most recent five years as a protective services consultant. In all, Garry has worked for the Province of Manitoba 27 years, 10 of them in Leaf Rapids.

He says his recent attendance at the ceremonies where fire fighters are awarded certificates by the Office of the Fire Commissioner after successfully completing fire fighting training ranked among the most rewarding parts of his job in protective services. He was able to witness the pride and satisfaction of personal accomplishment on each graduate's face as the certificates were awarded.

Another favourite part of his job involved participating in delivering new fire trucks in ANA communities. He particularly enjoyed participating in the excitement and seeing the appreciation of the people in the communities as they received new equipment for their fire and emergency services volunteers.

Garry has lived in the north all his life. One of his earliest jobs was with the Cormorant Lake Lodge when he was a youth. Before working with the province, he also worked for employers that included Inco, Canico and the Manitoba Metis Federation.

An avid hunter and fisher, Garry is also well known for his driftwood carving abilities. Don't be surprised to see many more carvings in years to come. Garry will now have plenty of time to scour the beaches of northern lakes in search of the best pieces of driftwood to use in his hobby.

Garry's friends and co-workers wish him a great deal of enjoyment as he begins a new chapter in his life.

Garry Nabess has begun carving out a new niche.

Community Contact

Paul Doolan, Editor
1680 Ellice Avenue, Bay 8
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0Z2
Ph: 204-945-2161
Toll free: 1-800-282-8069
Fax: 204-948-2389
E-mail: **paul.doolan@gov.mb.ca**
Web: **manitoba.ca/ana**

Community council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.